

# School committee approves policy reading

## Blackrock students present terrariums; second grade teacher honored at latest meeting in Coventry

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COVENTRY — At the Jan. 20 School Committee meeting, students from Blackrock Elementary School presented their eco-systems to the committee, which they had built themselves.

School Committee Chairperson Katherine Patenaude explained that the fourth graders presented their eco-systems, which were made out

of soda bottles that were cut at the top, to all in attendance.

She said that the students explained that the top part of the bottle was a terrarium which included gravel, top soil, grass, alfalfa, mustard seeds and crickets. She added that the students then showed the committee how they installed mesh that was suspended over the second soda bottle to create an aquarium.

Patenaude said the aquarium was filled with goldfish and algae called

Elodea.

She explained that the students did a great job explaining to the committee how each area of the eco-system worked together to help another.

Also as the meeting, second grade teacher Valerie Bishop was recognized by the committee for her work with two adopted students in her classroom.

Bishop had received the Beacon of Hope award for helping two of

her students join together to make a book.

Patenaude explained that a first reading was approved at the meeting for the Contributing Educator Policy. She added that this policy is being put forth by the Rhode Island Department of Education to help make it clear who is involved in the Coventry Educator Evaluation System.

She explained that this system includes annual teacher evaluations, as well as new regulations for student learning objectives and student growth percentiles.

She said that the result of this

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policy will be that “many teachers will have a bigger number of students they will interact with, as opposed to just one class.”

Patenaude said that the other item discussed at the meeting was about the pre-budget meeting report.

She said that the school committee and town council had held a work session on Jan. 9 to draw up a schedule for the

2012-2013 budgets.

She said that nothing big has taken place yet and that they will not know how Rhode Island will divvy up state funds slated to be given to the town. She added that committee members are also not sure what their health costs will be for the next fiscal year.

“We know what the pension costs will be unless the legislature changes something,” she said.

She said that Coventry is a

non-social security district and that the increase is approximately 13 percent, which is an increase of 0.2 percent.

Patenaude explained that because social security is not offered in the district they have to offer more money for teachers to put into another account.

“All we know is that it’s \$250,000 more than what we put in last year but it’s still up in the air because were in the midst of negotiations,” she finished.